

Message Text

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SUBJECT:REACTIONS IN ALSACE TO CHANGE OF FRENCH GOVERNMENT

FOLLOWING ARE PRELIMINARY REACTIONS TO CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT
AS EXPRESSED GENERALLY IN PRESS AND BY POLITICAL PERSONALITIES
IN ALSACE.

1. GISCARD, BY CALLING GUICHARD TO THE GOVERNMENT, WILL HOLD
UDR EFFECTIVELY IN LINE FOR THE TIME BEING, AND NEUTRALIZE
FORCES FAVORABLE TO CHIRAC. IF SKEPTICAL TOWARD PRO-EUROPEAN
STANCE OF BARRE, GUICHARD AND THE BARONS NEVERTHELESS SUPPORT
VIGOROUS BATTLE AGAINST INFLATION AND DEFENCE OF FRANC, ON
WHICH THEY BELIEVED CHIRAC MUCH TOO SOFT. PRESENCE OF GUICHARD
THUS IS THEIR PLEDGE TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT IN UNPOPULAR MEA-
SURES WHICH MUST BE TAKEN. ACCORDING CERTAIN SOURCES CLOSE TO
UDR, THE BARONS HAVE LONG RESENTED CHIRAC S EFFORTS TO TRANSFORM
UDR INTO VEHICLE FOR HIS ELECTION TO PRESIDENCY -OR AS ONE
WELL INFORMED NEWSPAPER MAN PUT IT- QUOTE THEY RESENTED POWER
PASSING TO YOUNGER HANDS UNQUOTE.
CONSENSUS HERE IS THAT GUICHARD WILL SUCCESSFULLY HOLD MAJORITY
IN LINE. CAREFULLY WORDED PUBLIC SUPPORT OF NEED TO BACK
GOVERNMENT IN TASKS OF FIGHTING INFLATION AND DEFENCE OF FRANC BY
LEADING UDR DEPUTIES SUCH AS BURCKEL OR SPRAUER INDICATES FAIRLY
CLEARLY THAT ALSATIAN UDR IN ANY CASE WILL REMAIN IN LINE.

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2. PUBLIC DECLARATIONS BY LEADING SOCIALISTS IN AREA, PLUS CONVERSATIONS WITH NEWSPAPERMEN AND POLITICAL PERSONALITIES LEAVE CLEAR OPINION THAT EVEN MODEST OPENING TO THE LEFT IS NOT IN THE CARDS. MITTERAND'S HOLD ON SOCIALISTS FAR TOO STRONG AND SOCIALIST EXPECTATIONS THAT LEFT WILL WIN NEXT LEGISLATIVES WILL PREVENT ANY BREAK FROM COMMON PROGRAM.

3. IN ALSACE CHANGE IS SEEN AS BRINGING FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN POLITICAL STRUCTURES. DEPARTURE OF ANDRE BORD, STRONG SUPPORTER OF CHIRAC, FROM GOVERNMENT MAY BRING HIS POLITICAL CAREER EFFECTIVELY TO A CLOSE. LACKING PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE OF A MINISTER, HE IS EXPECTED TO LOSE PRESIDENCY OF REGIONAL COUNCIL AT NEXT ELECTIONS, COULD LOSE PRESIDENCY OF CONSEIL GENERAL OF BAS-RHIN, WHICH WOULD MAKE UNCERTAIN HIS AMBITION TO BE ELECTED SENATOR IN NEXT ELECTIONS. CLOSER COLLABORATION BETWEEN BURCKEL, UDR, AND CARO, CENTRIST, TO CONSOLIDATE AND SOLIDIFY TENDENCIES REPRESENTED BY UDR, CENTER AND PARTICULARLY ALSATIAN REGIONALISM IS OPENLY DISCUSSED HERE, WITH BOTH BEING MENTIONED AS PRIME CANDIDATES FOR QUOTE ALSATIAN UNQUOTE REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNMENT.

4. FROM STRASBOURG THE OPINION IS CLEARLY THAT THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN LIFE OF UDR SINCE DE GAULLE'S DEPARTURE FROM POWER IN 1969, AND THAT PARTY NOW ON THRESHOLD OF REACHING CHANGES WHICH WILL GREATLY ALTER ITS STRUCTURE AND POSITION ON FRENCH AND REGIONAL POLITICAL SCENE.ROMINE

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